# Abacus Primary School Newsletter 555



What a pleasure it was to accompany 46 children from Year 5 to the O2 on Monday where they sang alongside over 8500 children from across the country as part of the Young Voices choir.



#### Next week we will be on WEEK 3









It was wonderful to see the children enjoy the Young Voices experience so much. They got to perform alongside the special guests which included MC Grammar, Tommy Blaize and Souparnika Nair. Thank you to all the family members who came along to watch and support the children.





Well done
to Posie and
Rose for
their
achievements in
gymnastics
and ballet.





Mrs Ferrari and Mrs Smith are busy planning a range of activities for Children's Mental Health Week, which will be taking place during the week beginning 3rd February 2025. The theme for 2025 is **Know yourself, Grow yourself.** On Friday 7th February 2025 we will be holding a 'know yourself, grow yourself' day

where we invite children to dress in a way that tells us something about them (or if they don't want to take part then please wear school uniform as usual). This could be their favourite colour, favourite outfit, what they want to be when they are older, a hobby or culture and the list could go on. If you would like to know more about the Place2Be charity and their work around children's mental health copy and paste the link below:

https://www.childrensmentalhealthweek.org.uk



ceived for the Waddle on Sea penguin and also the creativity in the designs. Our Young leaders ( with the help from Kids with Bricks, Sign Language club and a number of staff members) had the challenge of voting to get to our final three entries. These will now be sent to all classes so that the whole school is included in the final design...we will update you next week on the winning design.

# sports news

# **Cross Country Competition**

On 23rd January 2025, 33 children from years 3-6 took part in the Wickford Cross Country competition which is part of the School

Games initiative.

The event was attended by 5 schools altogether and we were very lucky that the rain held off for our races. Our year 3 and 4 children ran a distance of 1000m while year 5 and 6 ran 1500m.

All the children put into practice their weeks of early cold morning training sessions, sometimes in freezing temperatures to complete their races and they should all be very proud of themselves for running the whole distance to complete their races.

We are still awaiting the full results and will update you next week.







Below is a Focus on helping your autistic child to "unmask"

## WHAT IS MASKING?



#### WHAT IS UNMASKING?

Unmasking is the process of removing or giving up masking and revealing one's true, authentic, and autistic self.

### What Helps Me To Unmask

alittlepuddins.ie



Embracing Autistic Culture



Autistic Friends



Safe Place



Wearing Sensory Safe Clothes



Requesting Accommodations



Cards



Stimming







Spending Time Alone



Special Interest Items



Info dumping



shows/movies

#### Create Safe & Supportive **Environments for Your Autistic** Child

Create a safe and supportive environment for your child, one where your child will feel comfortable unmasking and free to be their authentic selves.

But how do you do that exactly?

Well, start by creating a sensory safe space, such as calm down corner, or by offering fidgets or other sensory tools that the child finds helpful.

You'll also want to focus on creating an inclusive environment. One where differences are celebrated and validated. That might mean tweaking the language you use, shifting your mindset, encouraging stim-

ming and infodumping, taking a strengthsbased approach to things, and never ever shaming them for their autistic traits.

You can also provide supports and accommodations for those times when using spoken language might be too hard to access. That might mean using visual aids, AAC tools, communication cards, or similar.

Another thing you can do is provide predictability and create strong routines. Big or unexpected changes can often be a reason why a child might mask so making the environment as predictable and routine based as possible can be super helpful.

Keeping those routines provide stability because they are predictable and familiar. The child knows what to expect and when. And when things are predictable, masking won't be as likely or as necessary.



https://www.andnextcomesl.com/2023/11/what-is-unmasking-in-autism.html

https://www.simplypsychology.org/how-to-unmask-autism.html

https://www.andnextcomesl.com/2023/10/how-to-support-autistic-children-who-mask.html

### What Parents & Educators Need to Know about

WHAT ARE THE RISKS? Physical wellbeing apps are useful tools for monitoring and improving our health. They allow us to balance nutrition, set goals, track our activities and sleep patterns, and motivate us to exercise. Nonetheless, there have been some reported drawbacks; this guide outlines some of these concerns and explains how to use fitness apps safely.

#### LACK OF PERSONALISATION

2/ 00

#### NOT DEVELOPED BY EXPERTS

#### REDUCED INTERACTION WITH OTHERS

#### DATA AND PRIVACY CONCERNS

#### ADDITIONAL COSTS

#### **DEPENDENCY ON** THE APP

60



### Advice for Parents & Educators

#### EXERCISE AND SOCIALISE

Highlight the importance of children enjoying fitness activities with family and friends, rather than always exercising alone. Imphasise the fun they can have by interacting with others rather than salely relying on an app to maintain their regime. Remind them of the importance of staying active, as well as the benefits of doing so with company.

#### PROMOTE POSITIVE BODY IMAGE

while we want children to be active and healthy, we must also ensure they don't become fixated on how they look and begin take things too far. During childhood and advisescence, the body is still growing and changing. It's vitally important for young people's wellbeing that we promote a positive body image and a healthy relationship with lood, empowering them to make informed decisions about their diet and lifestyle.

#### REVIEW THE APP FIRST

re allowing someone under 18 to install a fitness and wellbeing app, check its age ng, read its reviews and scroll through its data policy, to ensure its suitability for ager users. You could also try it yourself, to see if it's appropriate for the childrs icular reeds and decide if you're comfortable with them using it. Tinsure that any acy-compromising leatures - such as location tracking - are dissibled.

#### USE PARENTAL CONTROLS

As with all apps, it's important for parents to familiarise themselves with any controls on the app and to use these on a child's account. The specific settings vary between platforms but - most commonly - these will relate to acreen-time limits, disabling or capping in-app purchases, and managing social aspects or features which aren't age appropriats. By utilizing these controls, you can help to ensure a child is parting a safe experience.

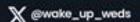
#### Meet Our Expert

Dr Claire Eutherland is an online safety consultant, educator and researcher who has developed and implemented anti-builtying and cyber safety policies for schools. She has written various academic papers and carried out research for the Australian Government comp use and sexting behaviour of young people in the UK, USA



The National College<sup>®</sup>

Source: See hall reference list on guide page at https://nati





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(O) @wake.up.wednesday



@wake.up.weds



# **Essex Royals Football Club**



# Is your child looking to start playing football?



We are looking for Year 1 Children to begin Training with our coaches over at Nevendon Park.

Fun Weekly Grassroots Football Training
A Positive Environment For Kids To Learn & Enjoy
Themselves

No Prior Football Experience Necessary
Excellent Value For Money - First Two Sessions Free

Message or Call: lan - 07921 453950 , Terry - 07866 527168 , or Mike - 07403 528878

30 years of Grassroots Football in Wickford www.essexroyalsfc.football

Experienced FA Qualified Coaches all DBS checked and approved